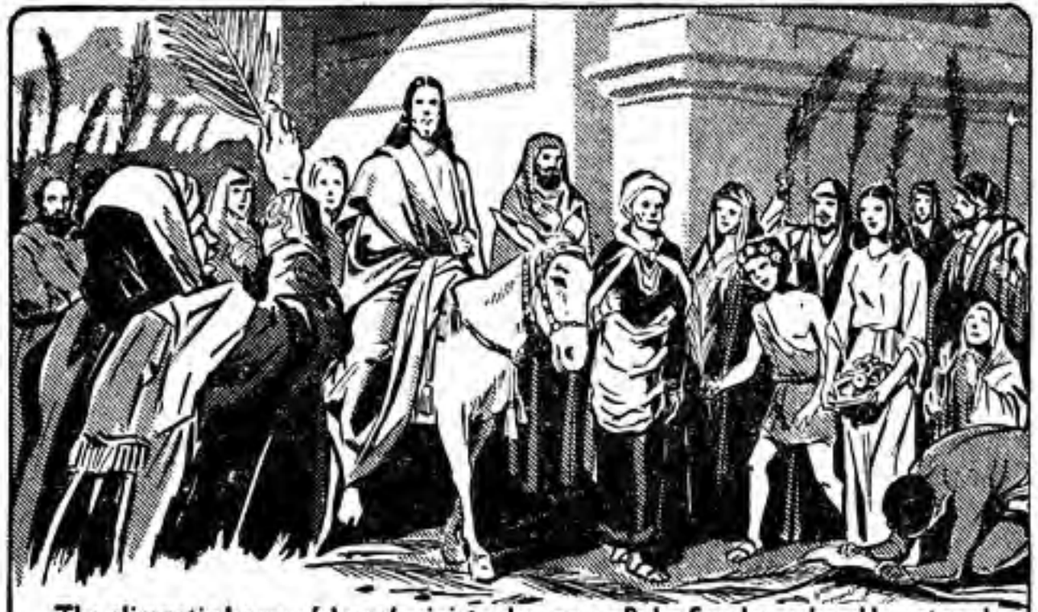
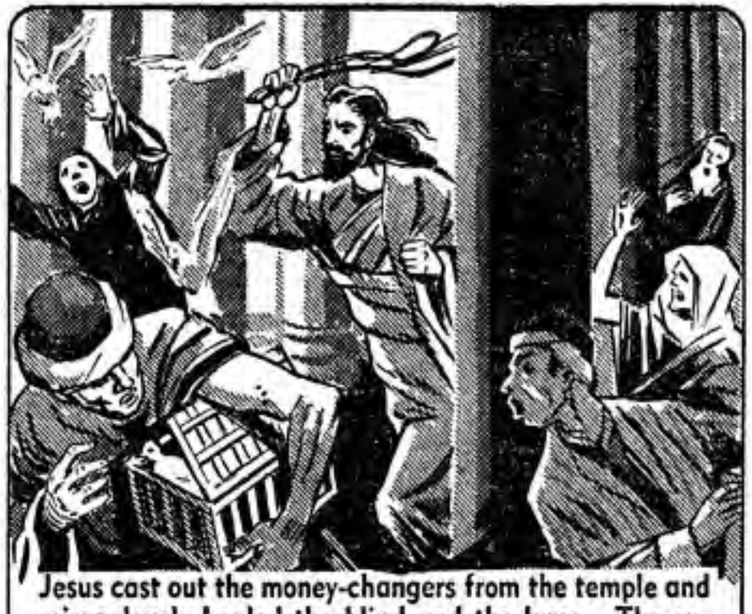
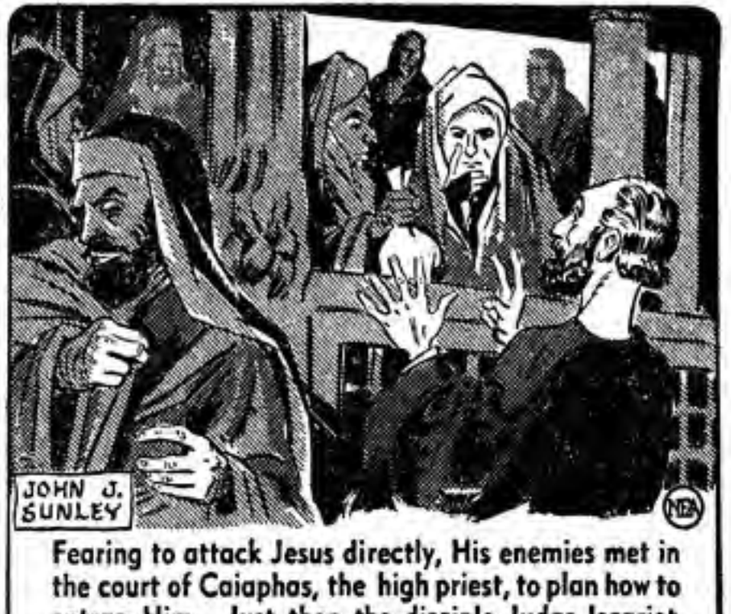
THE EASTER STORY—In the Beginning, Triumph



The climactic hours of Jesus' ministry began on Palm Sunday, when He entered Jerusalem, hailed by the multitudes. *And when he was come into Jerusalem, the whole city was moved, saying: Who is this? And the people said: This is Jesus, the prophet, from Nazareth of Galilee. (Matt. 21:10, 11)*



Jesus cast out the money-changers from the temple and miraculously healed the blind and the lame. The envious priests and Pharisees were enraged. *And seeking to lay hands on him, they feared the multitudes: because they held him as a prophet. (Matt. 21:45, 46)*



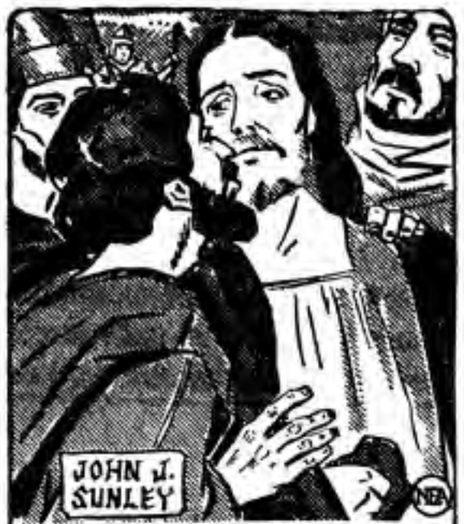
Fearing to attack Jesus directly, His enemies met in the court of Caiaphas, the high priest, to plan how to entrap Him. Just then the disciple Judas Iscariot entered. *And said to them: What will you give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. (Matt. 26:14, 15)*

THE EASTER STORY–The Last Supper

No. 2

That evening Jesus and His twelve disciples sat down to the Passover feast. It was their Last Supper. Jesus said that one of them had betrayed Him. The eleven innocent apostles were shocked, and wondered who among them bore the guilt. *And Judas that betrayed him, answering, said: Is it I, Rabbi? He saith to him: Thou hast said it. (Matt. 26:25)*

After supper, Jesus and the disciples went to the Mount of Olives, where, in the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed three times, while His disciples slept. *Rise, let us go: behold he is at hand that will betray me. (Matt. 26:46)*



It was Judas. Behind him were soldiers of the high priests. Judas made the agreed sign. *And forthwith coming to Jesus, he said: Hail, Rabbi. And he kissed him. (Matt. 26:49)*

Jesus was taken to the house of Caiaphas, where false witnesses convicted Him of blasphemy. *Then did they spit in his face and buffeted him: and others struck his face with the palms of their hands. (Matt. 26:67)*

In the morning, the priests delivered Jesus to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor. Pilate questioned Jesus and heard testimony, but found no case against Him. *And he answered him to never a word: so that the governor wondered exceedingly. (Matt. 27:14)*

Pilate had a Passover custom of giving one prisoner his freedom. So he asked the crowd whom should he free—Jesus or Barabbas, a popular outlaw. They demanded Barabbas. *Pilate said to them: What shall I do then with Jesus that is called Christ? They say all: Let him be crucified. (Matt. 27:22)*

THE EASTER STORY—Jesus Is Mocked

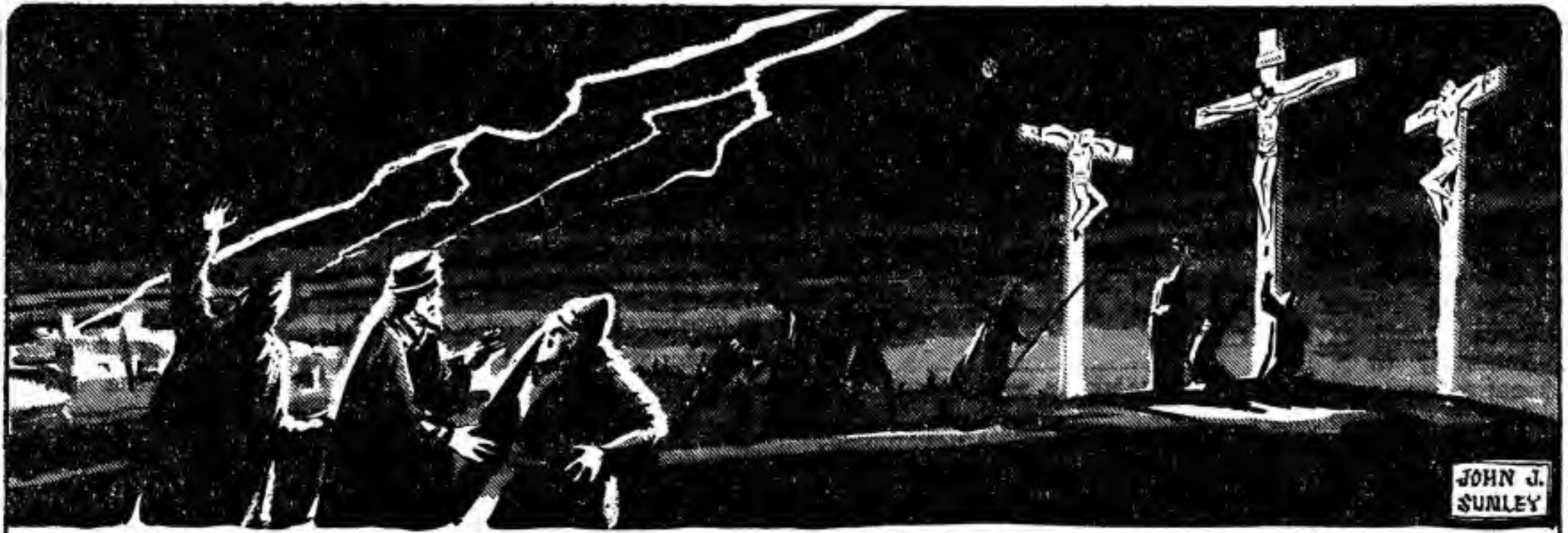
No. 4

Pilate thereupon released Barabbas and scourged Jesus and delivered Him to be crucified. *Taking water he washed his hands before the people, saying: I am innocent of the blood of this just man; look ye to it. (Matt. 27:24)*

His soldiers stripped Jesus and put a scarlet cloak on Him. They crowned Him with thorns and for a sceptre put a reed in his hand. *And bowing the knee before him, they mocked him, saying: Hail, king of the Jews. (Matt. 27:29)*

Then they garbed Jesus in His own clothes and forced Him toward Calvary, carrying His cross. But its weight was too much. *And going out, they found a man of Cyrene, named Simon: him they forced to take up his cross. (Matt. 27:32)*

THE EASTER STORY—Jesus Is Crucified



They crucified Him, and with Him, two thieves. And they sat and watched His agony, mocking and reviling Him. Darkness covered the earth. After three hours, the end was at hand. *And Jesus, again crying with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. (Matt. 27:50)*

That evening, rich Joseph of Arimethea, a disciple of Jesus, begged Pilate for the body of the Saviour. Joseph interred Him in his own new, rock-hewn tomb. *And he rolled a great stone to the door of the monument, and went his way. (Matt. 27:60)*

But the chief priests and the Pharisees, being tricksters themselves, feared the disciples might trick them by stealing Jesus' body, to make good His prophecy "After three days I will rise again." So they obtained from Pilate a guard of soldiers. *And they departing, made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone and setting guards. (Matt. 27.66)*

But to no avail. Toward dawn of the appointed day there was a great earthquake. An angel of the Lord rolled back the stone and sat upon it. And those about were dumb with fear, including Mary Magdalen and Mary the mother of James and Joseph. But the angel reassured them, saying: *He is not here, for he is risen, as he said. (Matt. 28:6)*